



Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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HONEY CREEK RESORT STATE PARK GOES GREEN

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DES MOINES — A project destined to have a significant impact on Iowa's tourism industry has been designed to have a *low* impact on the landscape.

As the largest construction project in the history of the Department of Natural Resources, Honey Creek Resort State Park will use green technology to create an eco-friendly building and grounds, minimizing its effects on the environment.

“One of the primary goals I have established for the Department of Natural Resources is for the department itself to be a leader in sustainable and low-impact construction,” said DNR Director Richard Leopold.

“I can think of no better way to showcase this ethic than at our first-ever resort park,” Leopold added.

The low-impact design began when biological researchers conducted a one-year environmental assessment of the property for the DNR before construction ever started. The development was designed to protect the most sensitive natural resources on the site.

“This gave our developers the ability to plan construction around the natural habitat, allowing us to showcase it rather than disturb it,” said Terry Montgomery, administrator of the Honey Creek Resort project.

The lodge building at Honey Creek Resort is being designed to achieve a Leadership in Environmental Engineering and Design (LEED) certification, which is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings, administered by the U.S. Green Building Council.

To achieve LEED certification the DNR is undertaking many efforts in the construction of the lodge, among those included in this project will be:

- All waste from construction is being sorted and as many materials as possible are being recycled.
- The indoor construction will use low Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) materials. Ordinary paint and carpet can give off chemical vapors and cause a range of health problems. Low VOC materials at Honey Creek will prevent odors and emissions from these chemicals and improve the overall health of the building and its occupants.
- The resort's large common areas will use geothermal technology for heating and cooling. Geothermal relies on pipes buried underground that absorb heat from the earth during the winter and disperse heat from buildings to the ground in the summer.
- Appliances that economize water and energy usage will be used throughout the resort.

The effort to build the resort with green technology does not stop with the lodge. Outside the main resort facility, Honey Creek's grounds will also use eco-friendly designs:

- The resort's lighting designs will minimize the amount of "light pollution" into the night skies over Rathbun Lake. These lights will create safe parking lots and walkways, but save electricity and preserve the dark night sky for star gazing.
- The entire resort will have eco-friendly features including specialized landscape areas known as bioswales, designed to filter and absorb stormwater. These bioswales will help protect the water quality of Rathbun Lake.
- The resort golf course will apply for certification from the National Audubon Society, a seal of approval given to courses that protect the environment, conserve natural resources and provide wildlife habitats. The course has been constructed on old cropland, returning acres of the surrounding area to native prairie and grasses.
- During construction, erosion and any threat to the Rathbun Lake watershed has been carefully managed, more than 25,000 linear feet of silt fences have been used to date on this project, as have thousands of square feet of erosion matting.

Montgomery said some of the methods used are just common sense, like using native plant materials in the landscaping. Native plants are much more hardy and tolerant of regional weather patterns, making them low-maintenance and eliminating the need for extensive irrigation systems.

“We have really tried to consider the big picture when it comes to Honey Creek,” said Montgomery, “not only giving folks a gorgeous setting to enjoy the outdoors, but making sure we preserve the naturalness of that setting. Being environmentally responsible is a key component to building Honey Creek Resort State Park.”

Honey Creek Resort State Park is scheduled to open in August 2008. Reservations for group meetings and events can be made by calling 641-724-9600.

For more information about Honey Creek Resort State Park, contact Terry Montgomery at 515-402-7413.